

Minutes for the 2010 NEERA 1002 Multistate Coordinating Committee Meeting

Renaissance Long Beach Hotel, Long Beach, CA, November 2, 2010, 7-9 pm.

Tom Morris welcomed the group and reviewed the agenda. Tom noted that this was the second formal meeting of the *Multistate Coordinating Committee and Information Exchange Group (NEERA 1002) on Adaptive Management for Improved Nutrient Management*.

Tom Morris asked if anyone had suggested changes to the minutes from last year's meeting. Karl Czymmek motioned to accept the minutes from last year's meeting without change. Motion seconded by Bianca Moebius-Clune. Minutes unanimously approved without change.

Review of four objectives of NEERA.

Tom Morris reviewed the four objectives of NEERA 1002. Group has a short discussion about objective number 2, incorporate adaptive management concepts into the NRCS Code 590 Standard for nutrient management. NRCS has posted draft changes to the 590 standard to allow for the inclusion of adaptive management in nutrient management plans. Review and comment period ended Monday, November 1.

Review of Joint Symposium on Adaptive Management in St. Louis at the 65th International SWCS Annual Conference.

Jorge Delgado reported that attendance was good with about 70 people attending. The Symposium was an interactive session, which is not typically done at the SWCS conference. Jorge noted that the SWCS Program Committee praised the symposium in the wrap up discussions after the meeting. There was excellent participation in the interactive sessions. There was a good mix of people with different backgrounds (University, NRCS, Extension, private industry) attending the symposium, and most attendees stayed for most of the Symposium, which indicates that interactive sessions can be successfully implemented in a Conference where interactive sessions are not typically scheduled. Sandy Bell reviewed the topics covered in the Symposium and the adult learning methods that were demonstrated as a preview to the Symposium at the SSSA conference tomorrow, November 3.

A discussion ensued about whether adult learning techniques could be used in an online situation such as a distance learning class. Consensus was that the techniques could work if the web software could host multiple discussion groups at the same time. Tracy thought the system used in Iowa for webinars supported multiple subgroups, but he would need to check the system's capability.

The group agreed to try interactive discussion on at least 1 webinar in the coming year. Tom Morris agreed to explore having an interactive webinar in 2011.

Discussion/decision about Symposium in 2011

Jorge Delgado thanked the committee for working with him to successfully complete two consecutive Joint Symposia in 2009 and 2010 with the SWCS and the SSSA about adaptive management. He noted that it is unusual for a Joint Symposium to be held on one topic for two consecutive years. Jorge will be organizing a Joint Symposium on another topic next year. The consensus of the committee was to skip organizing a Symposium in 2011, but to create a Community for Adaptive Management in the American Society of Agronomy. This would allow the committee to host paper and poster sessions at the National Meetings. Tom Morris agreed to complete the paperwork to create a Community for Adaptive Management in the American Society of Agronomy.

Update about Technotes.

Chris Gross gave a report on four Technotes under development to explain the change in the Code 590 Nutrient Management Standard to allow adaptive management. The four Technotes currently have these preliminary titles: 1) Background on Nitrogen Management (6-7 pages), 2) Evaluation Tools for Nitrogen In-Season and Post-Season, 3) Group Coordination/Participatory Learning, and 4) Steps to Adaptive Management – Making it Work.

Technote number 1 is in final draft form and Chris had copies available for review. The other three Technotes will be available for review as soon as they are completed. Draft copies will be sent by email to committee members for review and editing.

Norm Widman mentioned that the process needs to speed up. Everything needs to be ready by February. Technotes do not need to be published in the Federal Register but they do need to be completed when the standard is completed.

Data from some adaptive management programs is shared in groups of farmers to enhance learning and adoption of new practices. A discussion occurred about how to keep data confidential while still sharing data in groups for enhanced learning. There was a great concern for keeping individual farm data confidential – but also an understanding that sharing in groups was important. Tracy Blackmer said in Iowa they assign each farm a number. Each farmer knows their own number but not others unless they share among themselves. Greg Binford spoke about how MD and DE are collecting data and storing it with private businesses rather than public servers to prevent FOI requests. Tom Morris said that the data from the Bay Farms program in PA is stored on a private consultant's server to maintain confidentiality.

Norm Widman encouraged everyone to think about how evaluation could be built into all levels of the adaptive management process because outcomes showing benefits to programs are needed to show results and to gain support for programs. Some committee members thought it would be a good idea to use data collected in an

adaptive management program to increase the accuracy of modeling programs like N-Leap.

Education process with NRCS after complete Technotes

Tom Morris was interested to know if NRCS would need help from NEERA 1002 to educate NRCS staff after completion of the Technotes. Chris Gross thought the education would be completed by internal NRCS staff, but did not rule out having NEERA 1002 members help with the education. Norm Widman thought different formats would be used such as: Webinars, Regional Meetings etc. Once the internal education is accomplished the external education with partners and farmers will need to begin, and at that time NEERA 1002 committee members could help.

Web site for NEERA 1002

The committee wants to have a web site to post information about adaptive management. Tracy Blackmer said he could establish a web site for NEERA 1002.

Submit proposals for NEERA 1002 committee work

There was little interest in submitting a proposal for a joint project in adaptive management at this time.

Communications within and from NEERA1002

It was agreed that we would continue meeting once a year at the SSSA meetings, and that we would use webinars to communicate between meetings.

Next steps – activities for next year

Plans for 2011

The group agreed to:

1. Hold the next NEERA 1002 annual meeting at the national SSSA meeting in San Antonio, TX.
2. Use webinars 2-3 times a year to meet and discuss NEERA 1002 business. Quirine Ketterings agreed to host a webinar in early Dec or in the winter to explain her program of adaptive management for nutrient management in New York. The webinar will be interactive if possible.
3. Review and edit the NRCS Technotes as they become available about adaptive management to accompany the change in the Code 590 Standard.
4. Tom Morris will find someone to agree to host a webinar in the spring or early summer about how they are using adaptive management in their nutrient management program.

5. Tracy Blackmer agreed to set up a web site for NEERA 1002.
6. Tom Morris agreed to complete the paperwork to create a Community for Adaptive Management in the American Society of Agronomy.

Attendees:

Tom Morris, UConn; Tracy Blackmer, ISA; Greg Binford, UDel; Haiying Tao, UConn; Quirine Ketterings, Cornell; Doug Beegle, PSU; Karl Czymmek, Cornell; Richard Meinert, UConn; Dan Sullivan, Oregon State U; Jerry Lemunyon, NRCS; Jorge Delgado, ARS; Chris Gross, NRCS; Norm Widman, NRCS; Harold van Es, Cornell; Bianca Moebius-Clune, Cornell; Peter Kyveryga, ISA; Bill Angstadt, Del-MD Ag Business; Sandy Bell, UConn; Martha Zwonitzer, ISA; Mary Ann Rozum, USDA-NIFA; Timothy J. Healey, Agrotain International; Doug Smith, USDA-ARS. (22 attendees)